

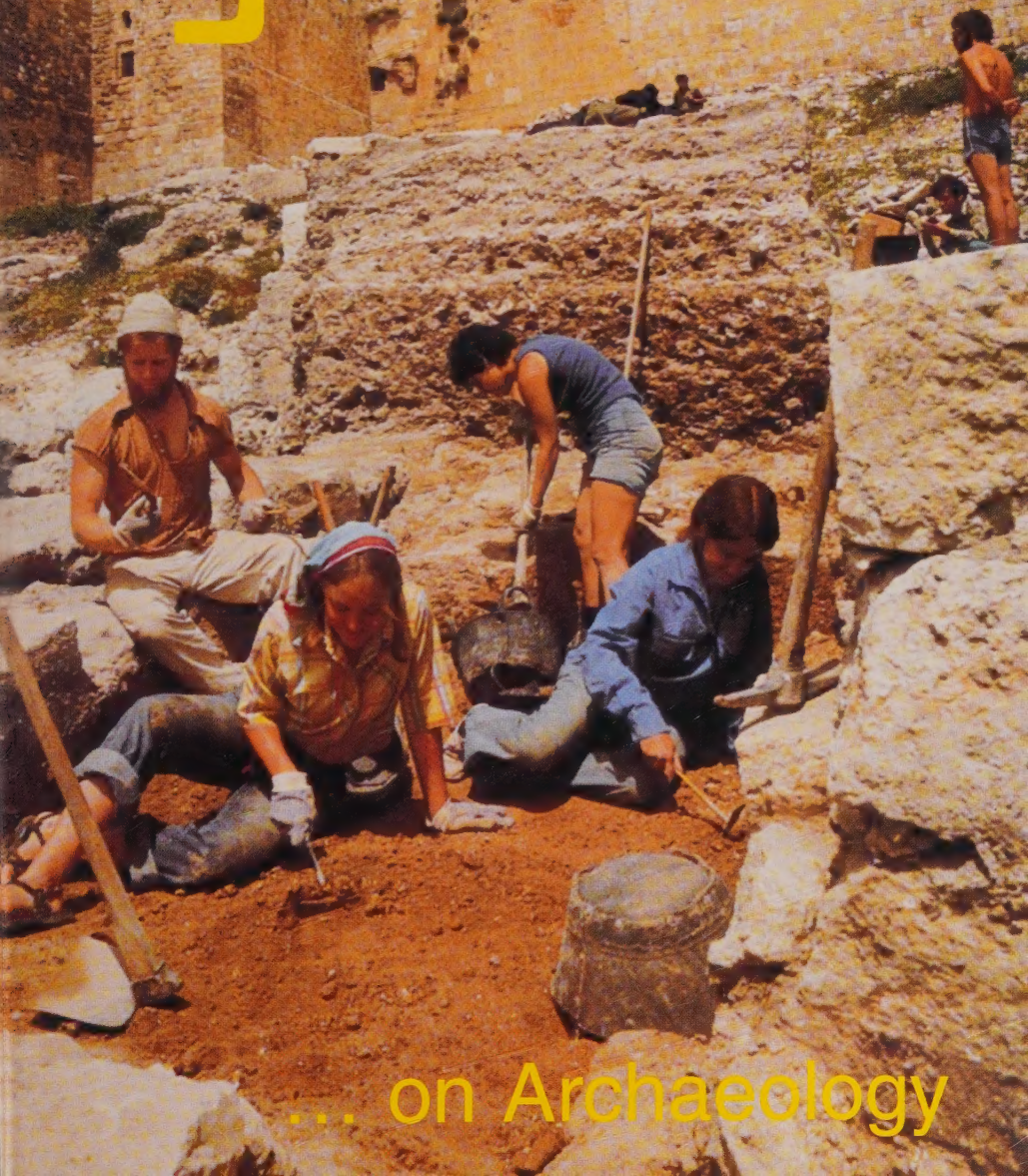
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Light



... on Archaeology

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LIGHT ... on a New World

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Archaeology

Archaeology - 'The study of human antiquities - usually as discovered by excavation.' (Chambers English Dictionary)

THE AIM OF this special edition of Light on Archaeology is to point the reader to the wealth of information that has literally been unearthed by the spades of patient, dedicated people which helps to confirm the historical accuracy of the Bible - God's Word. Many sites exist in the lands mentioned in the Bible where artifacts of various kinds reveal the life and customs of the people who lived there centuries earlier.

The Bible has been ridiculed and dismissed in recent times as inaccurate and unreliable. However, students of Biblical Archaeology have found that as the science of archaeology becomes more sophisticated, much more evidence is coming to light regularly that says just the opposite! Finds have been made that show us how historically accurate God's Word really is.

For those of us who have been privileged to visit Israel, God's Land, it is thrilling to look down and examine the shaft that Joab climbed up to take the city of Jebus (later Jerusalem) for King David.¹ It is exciting to wade through King Hezekiah's tunnel, from the spring of Gihon to the pool of Siloam (Silwan).² It is fascinating to examine the actual scrolls found at Qumran by the Dead Sea and to walk around the Citadel of Jerusalem, the remains of Herod's fortress palace where Christ was paraded, mocked and then condemned by Pilate.³

All of these places give us visible evidence of the accuracy of the Biblical record.

The following series of articles is only a small sample of the information available, but, hopefully, the object will be achieved to direct the reader to further studies of the deeper truths revealed in the Bible.

So with your Bible in hand, you are invited to examine the evidence to see whether the work of the archaeologist confirms or denies God's Word.

¹2 Sam 5.7-9; 1 Chronicles 11.5-7 ²2 Kings 20.20 ³Luke 23.1-25

The Dig at Beth Shean



Archaeological dig at Beth Shean

IN THE BACKGROUND of the picture is the 80 metre (263 feet) high Tel of Beth-Shean, one of the oldest cities in Bible Lands. The remains of 20 layers of settlement have been found going back more than 3,000 years BC. The Israelites failed to conquer the city in Joshua's time,¹ and the fortified town was still under Philistine control in the time of Saul, the first king of Israel. When Saul and his sons were slain in battle their bodies were hung on the walls of this city by the victors.²

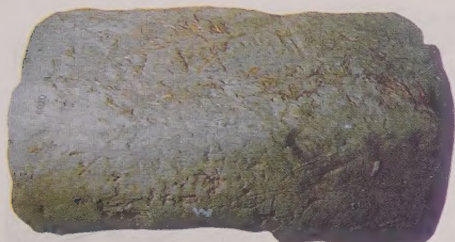
Beth-shean is included in the cities of Solomon's kingdom.³ When the Greek empire dominated the area the city was known as Scythopolis. Pliny, the Roman author who lived in the first century AD mentions the city in his writings. It was one of the cities in the Roman province of Decapolis which was visited by Jesus.⁴

The city was further developed by the Romans and all around the ancient Tel the archaeologists are busy uncovering this large city that was devastated by an earthquake. A recent find is a mosaic featuring the picture of a zebra, an animal not found in Israel. Work continues on the site and who knows what may yet be uncovered?

¹Joshua 17.16; Judges 1.27 ²1 Samuel 31.6-13 ³1 Kings 4.12 ⁴Mark 7.31

Egypt - at the time of Moses

THE ILLUSTRATION SHOWS a brick made from clay and strengthened with straw; this was a manufacturing method employed in Egypt over 1,000 years before Christ. To



No ordinary brick!

pander to the pride and arrogance of the king for whom it was made, it bears the sovereign seal of Pharaoh Rameses II who became obsessed with the desire to create memorials of himself for posterity. We are reminded of the scriptural account in Exodus chapters 1 and 5, because it was the Israelitish slaves who undertook many building works for Pharaoh under difficult conditions.

It is generally thought that Rameses II was the ruler who used Israelitish labour to build the treasure cities of Pithom and Raamses¹ and also the one ruling at the time that Moses led his people's exodus from Egypt towards the promised land. This brick reminds us of times past when God has used His power to save His people; a feat which will be repeated preparatory to the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.²

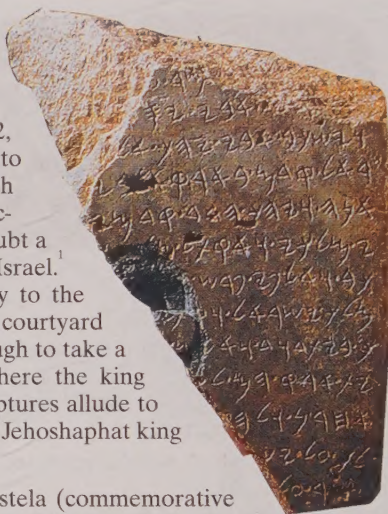


Egyptian tomb painting showing brick making

¹Exodus 1.11 ²Jeremiah 30.10,11

The 'House of David'

AT TEL DAN in upper Galilee in Northern Israel a fragment of an inscription on basalt stone has been uncovered. It was part of the paving near the entrance of the outer gate of the ancient city of Dan. In 1992, in order to tidy up the site for presentation to visitors, a heap of debris was removed which dated from the time of the Assyrian destruction of the city by Tiglath-pileser III - no doubt a legacy of his campaign against northern Israel.¹ Unexpectedly, a hitherto unknown gateway to the city was uncovered. The entrance led to a courtyard where stood a low stone platform large enough to take a throne. This possibly marked the place where the king would sit on ceremonial occasions. The Scriptures allude to such a custom when Ahab king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah sat in the gate of Samaria.²



*'The House of David'
inscription*

The inscription is a section of a victory stela (commemorative stone) about the conquests of one of the kings of Aram, recording the defeat of his foes sometime in the 9th century BC. The inscription is written in Aramaic (a language closely related to early Hebrew) and is unique because it is the first reference found outside the Bible to 'The House of David.' The conquests recorded on the stone are related to the events written in the first book of Kings, where we read that Asa, king of Judah, bribed king Ben-hadad to go to war with Baasha, king of Israel.³

When Israel recaptured the city of Dan, possibly after Ahab king of Israel's defeat by Ben-Hadad as described in 1 Kings 20, this Aramean victory stela could well have been destroyed by the Jews and its fragments used in the construction of the area surrounding the entrance gate to the city. It had lain there for many centuries until it was uncovered in 1993 by a team of Israeli archaeologists who are now eagerly searching for the other pieces. Who knows what may yet be found to add to this confirmation of the Biblical records.

This find has also prompted the re-examination of other inscriptions, and it has now been suggested that the famous Moabite Stone (see page 6) which describes the rebellion of Mesha king of Moab, against Israel, also goes on to describe an attack on the kingdom of Judah. In a poorly preserved portion of this Moabite stone is probably another reference to 'Beth David' or the house of David which was a way of describing the kings of Judah.⁴

¹2 Kings 15.29 ²1 Kings 22.10 ³1 Kings 15.16-20 ⁴1 Kings 12.19; Isaiah 7.13; Jeremiah 21.12

Ophir



Ophir Potsherd

'GOLD FROM OPHIR FOR BETH-HORON 30 SHEKELS'

is the translation of this inscription on a potsherd that was found in 1946 at Tel Qasileh (north east of Tel Aviv).

The exact location of Ophir remains a mystery, although there have been many ideas put forward by Bible students. Flavius Josephus (38-100 AD), the Jewish historian, linked Ophir with India and it is possible to show that from the second millennium BC there was a busy sea trade taking place between the Persian Gulf and India. The link with India is further strengthened by the fact that all the com-

modities mentioned in 1 Kings 10 verses 11 and 22 were found in ancient India. Others have made a connection with Sofula in Eastern Africa, called by the Arabs Zofar or Zofaal. The same name is rendered elsewhere Sophara which does not require much alteration to make it read (S)OPH(A)IR(A). It has also been pointed out that Burma is a country which affords all the products named, '*Almug trees [sandalwood], precious stones, gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks.*'¹

Ophir must have been a considerable journey away from Solomon's port at Ezion-geber on the Gulf of Aqaba (near today's Eilat), for the return journey seems to have taken '*three years*'¹ to complete.

The quantities of gold from Ophir imported into Judah were sizeable - '*And they came to Ophir and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents...*' and '*Even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver to overlay the walls of the houses...*'²

Almost 200 years later God, through the prophet Isaiah, refers to the fame of Ophir by saying '*I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.*'³

The oldest book in the Bible, Job, refers to the gold of Ophir twice and perhaps the significance of Job's reference to wisdom being more valuable than the gold of Ophir⁴ should not be overlooked by the Bible student.

All the references to Ophir at one time pointed to a place that did not seem to exist but the finding of this tablet by the archaeologists not only tells us it existed but confirms again the accuracy of God's Word.

¹ 1 Kings 10.11,22 ² 1 Kings 9.28; 1 Chronicles 29.4 ³ Isaiah 13.12 ⁴ Job 22.24 and 28.16

Moab

THIS STONE WAS discovered in 1868. It was found in the land of Moab and was carved with an inscription which its finder, a man named Klein, recognised as being important. He had insufficient funds to purchase the stone and had to go to Europe to raise them. While he was away, the Arabs broke the stone into pieces, so they could make more money out of the deal. (They did the same thing with some of the Dead Sea Scrolls). Fortunately, a Frenchman, M. Clermont-Ganneau had the good sense to take an impression, so that they were able to piece the stone together correctly and decipher its message.

The language in which the inscription is written is very similar to Biblical Hebrew, and the events it records supplement most remarkably the record from I Kings chapter 16 to 2 Kings chapter 3. Both tell how that during the reigns of Omri and Ahab, Moab was tributary to Israel, but that after the death of Ahab, Mesha king of Moab rebelled. Mesha records on this stone that after this time, he was able to defeat Jehoram in several battles and rid the land of him.



The Moabite Stone

The actual words are:

'Now the men of God had always dwelt in the land of Ataroth, and the King of Israel had built Ataroth for them: but I fought against the town and took it and slew all the people of the town as satiation for Chemosh and Moab.'

Moab's fortresses and her cities were restored and made stronger. Her earlier defeats were explained as being due to the anger of her gods.

The stone records the name of Israel's God, Yahweh. The inscription does contain one error. It boasts that as a result of Moab's victories '*Israel perished for ever*'. Many a nation has wished for the destruction of Israel as a nation, but it is a wish that will never be fulfilled. The proof of this is a marvellous story indeed and a separate study.

If we compare the events related to the stone with the Bible record, we see again the truth of the Word of God. It is all the more important when we realise that our knowledge of Moab is so small and yet one of the few incidents recorded about her can be proved in this way.

Tel Mardikh

HAVE YOU HEARD of the empire of Ebla? It is not surprising if you have not - for modern history text books make no references to this kingdom, which existed from approximately 2,300 BC to 1,700 BC.

In fact, only students of ancient Middle East history are likely to have come across the name of Ebla, and even then, only in passing - not realising the extent and power of this empire which stretched around the shores of the eastern Mediterranean for nearly 600 years. Now the re-writing of our history books will again be necessary to fill the gaps in our knowledge of the past; for there has been a remarkable archaeological discovery in Syria between Aleppo and Damascus, on the site of Tel Mardikh.

On this site of a 4,000 year old fortification, perhaps the most remarkable 'find' of the century has been uncovered - 18,000 fired clay and rock tablets relating to the economy, administration and international dealings of this once great empire of Ebla.

Popular history of the third millennium BC is taught with little regard for the Biblical account of the customs, manners, social behaviour and level of education of the people of this period.



Part of the Tel Mardikh library

Now for the first time it appears that there exists a record contemporary with the Biblical account of the times, and so different is the picture it reveals from that of accepted historical suppositions, that the linguist in charge of the tablets, Dr. Pettinato, has claimed that this discovery calls for a fundamental revision of third millennium BC culture and history.

The tablets were discovered in some out-buildings of a palace situated within the vast fortifications around the top of the tel. Many of the buildings, due to their solid roofs of some two feet in thickness, are intact and free of debris. Most of the walls are plastered a grey-green colour, with murals in good condition. The two rooms in which the tablets were discovered had been shelved with wood but, due to time and the weight of the tablets, this shelving had collapsed with some breakages; but the tablets, many containing 3,000 lines of cuneiform writing, are in readable condition.

The tablets tell of an 'empire' and name many areas under the control of Ebla, such as Sinai, Assyria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Carchemish, Lachish, Gaza, Hazor and others. Bible students will readily recognise that a number of these names appear in the Old Testament record and it is interesting to note that of the three languages of the tablets, an hitherto unknown tongue, closely resembling Hebrew is prevalent and many common names recorded by the people of Ebla are easily recognisable to Bible readers.

AB-RA-MU	-	(ABRAM)
E-SA-UM	-	(ESAU)
IS-MA-EL	-	(ISHMAEL)
IS-RA-EL	-	(ISRAEL)
MI-KA-EL	-	(MICHAEL)
MI-KA-YAH	-	(MICAIAH)
YE-RU-SA-LU-UM	-	(JERUSALEM)

Further, many common Ebla words are the same as Hebrew, such as 'and' (WA), 'perfect' (TAMMIN), 'fall' (NAPAL) and 'good' (TOB).

Perhaps most interesting of all are the quite extensive descriptions of the Creation and of the Flood, so often derided by modern historians.

The tablets are being translated and published and their contents will be invaluable in enlarging our understanding of the world of 2,000 BC; for they reveal a sophisticated system of international and civil law, including treaties of trade between Ebla and her neighbours within the framework of political agreements. These have been likened to the present-day Treaty of Rome between the EC members.

In addition, long lists of zoological, geographic and mathematical material have been found and there are weather forecasts in some meteorological texts. Records were made of visiting Mesopotamian scribes and mathematicians.

Proverbs and literary works are also preserved, including a set of bilingual tablets for the purpose of teaching translation, besides thousands of matching words. There seems no doubt that the tablets of Tel Mardikh contain the world's oldest vocabulary lists - a source of no little consternation to students of ancient languages; for it is widely held that Biblical Hebrew is an evolved language, used during the first millennium BC. Isaiah, the Hebrew prophet however, had indicated that his language was '*the language of Canaan*',¹ and the Tel Mardikh tablets now support the Biblical reference - Hebrew has now to be recognised as one of the world's oldest languages (and perhaps the language spoken by Noah, Canaan being the grandson of Noah through Ham).²

Interesting for Bible students is the fact that the Bible records that Abram, together with his father Terah, left the city of Ur in southern Mesopotamia to go into Canaan. They travelled as far as Haran and dwelt there.³ Haran was some 300 miles north east from the site at Tel Mardikh and appears to be named after Haran, Abram's brother.⁴ On his journey to Canaan, Abram in all probability, passed through Tel Mardikh, the then centre of trade and commerce, and of course, the language of Abram would be that of Ebla and of Canaan.

The other two languages written in cuneiform and discovered at Tel Mardikh are Sumerian and Akkadian. It had previously been assumed that these were the earliest cuneiform languages, developed in east and south Mesopotamia and the possibility that Syrian and Canaanite communications existed in cuneiform had been ruled out (with the exception of Ugaritic texts). But the Tel Mardikh tablets now reveal Sumerian scripts pre-dating those found in eastern Mesopotamia - throwing accepted theories of language origins to the winds.

The Akkadian scripts found at Tel Mardikh refer mainly to the later period of the history of Ebla. One of the deities worshipped at Mardikh was Marduk or the Merodak of the Bible. It appears to be basically the same name as Nimrod, the '*mighty hunter before the Lord*' mentioned in Genesis.⁵ Nimrod, who founded the city of Babel, appears to have been deified and the cult continued long after Ebla had ceased. The main consonants of Nimrod are M R D, hence:-

N i M R o D

M a R D i k h

M e R o D a k

Tel Mardikh was then the place of worship for Mardikh.

The finds of Tel Mardikh and the empire of Ebla, have so far only revealed confirmation of the scriptural narrative.

¹Isaiah 19.18 ²Genesis 10.6 ³Genesis 11.31,32 ⁴Genesis 11.27 ⁵Genesis 10.9

Assyria

THE KINGDOM OF Israel under David and Solomon had been divided in the days of Solomon's son Rehoboam, and had become two kingdoms - the kingdom of Israel in the north, made up of ten of the original twelve tribes, with Samaria as its capital city; and the kingdom of Judah in the south, made up of the other two tribes with Jerusalem still as the capital.

In the northern kingdom of Israel there were no good kings at all and during the reigns of kings like Ahab and his wicked wife Jezebel, idolatry flourished and corruption increased. Eventually the kingdom fell before the might of Assyria.

The Black Obelisk was discovered by Henry Layard in 1845 and describes the campaigns of Shalmanezar III of Assyria who reigned at about 850 BC.

The scenes depicted show tribute being paid to the great Assyrian monarch and actually show Jehu,¹ bowing before the king in the presence of his officers. The tribute consists of silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden vase and cups, gold buckets, tin, a royal staff and fruit. The photograph on the next page shows the particular panels from the second row of the obelisk.

There is a dark patch underneath the kneeling figure of Jehu which has been caused by the hundreds of visitors to the British Museum who have pointed to the panel and polished the stone.

Hezekiah was one of the good kings of the southern kingdom of Judah. During his reign, Sennacherib invaded Israel. The Assyrians then came against Judah. Hezekiah, in consultation with his ministers decided to make sure that if



The Black Obelisk

¹2 Kings 10.31-33



Panel from the Black Obelisk

the invaders came against Jerusalem, they would find difficulty in getting an adequate water supply. At the same time, it was important to ensure Jerusalem had a good water supply.

Hezekiah's Aqueduct

A TUNNEL WAS constructed from the spring at Gihon - what is now called the Virgin's Fountain - under the city walls and through the rock to the southern end of the city of Jerusalem, to the pool of Siloam. This would be a difficult feat in these days of sophisticated surveying and measuring equipment. It was even more remarkable for the times of Hezekiah, because the impending invasion meant there was very little time and gangs of workmen had to start from either end. When the tunnel was complete, the spring outside the city was blocked up and the water flowed into the city. A map on page 14 shows the winding course that the tunnel took.



Hezekiah's water course

The second book of Chronicles records:

'And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, He took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him. So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water?'¹

In the second book of Kings:

'And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?'²

The watercourse was a tremendous feat of engineering by any standards. At one time, critics of the Bible said openly that it was

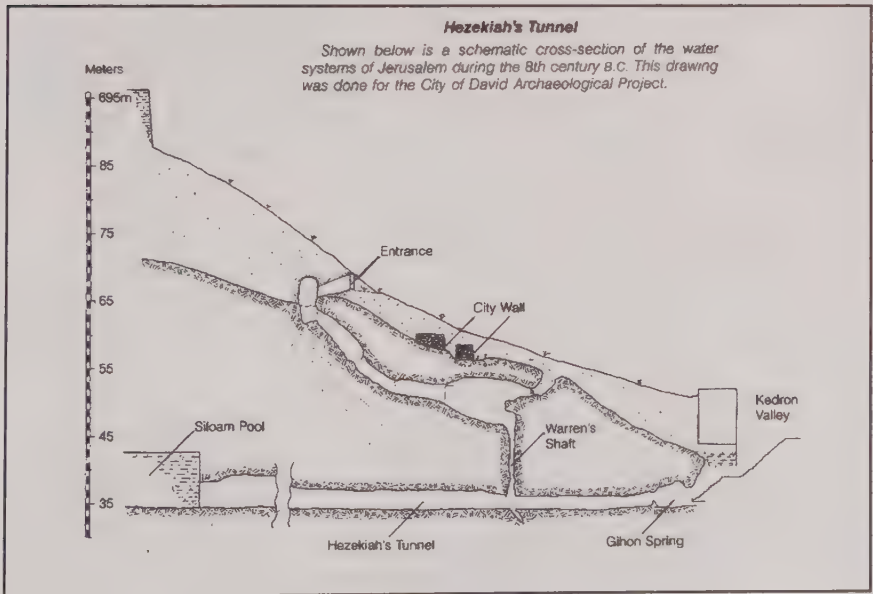
¹2 Chronicles 32.2-4 ²2 Kings 20.20

impossible, because of the great difficulty of the project: this was another example, they said, of the way in which Bible accounts had become exaggerated and then recorded as historical fact. This argument cannot be used against the Bible today because the watercourse has been discovered.

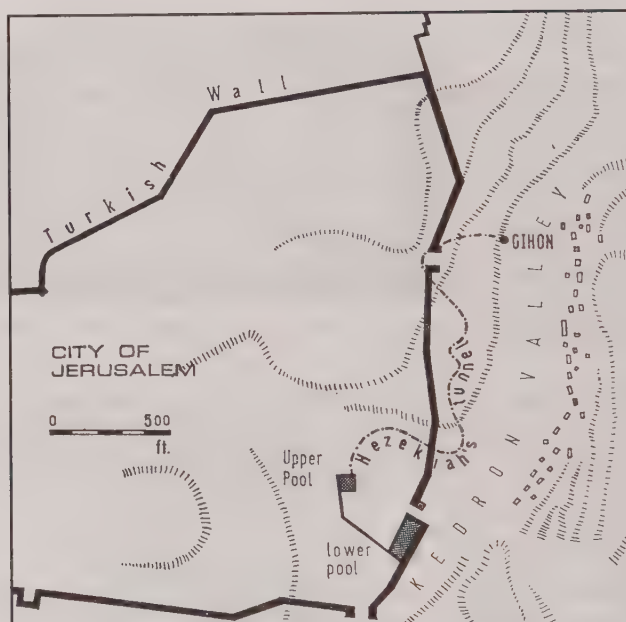


Siloam inscription

An Arab boy accidentally fell into the Pool of Siloam and discovered the underwater opening of the tunnel. Just as the new London Bridge has a commemorative plaque marking its official opening, so a plaque had been placed on the wall of the tunnel.



Cut through section showing extent of tunnels.



Map showing course of Hezekiah's aqueduct.

This inscription is written in the old Hebrew script of the time of Hezekiah and part of the tablet, which is now in the Istanbul Museum, reads as follows:

'Now this is the history of the excavations. While the excavators were still lifting up the pick, each towards his neighbour, and while there were yet three cubits to excavate, there was heard the voice of one man calling to his neighbour: for there was an excess of rock on the right hand. And when on the day of excavations the excavators had struck pick against pick, one against another, the waters flowed from the spring to the Pool, a distance of 1,200 cubits. One hundred cubits was the height of the rock above the head of the miners.'

We cannot deny the existence of Hezekiah's watercourse because, as Keller describes, it is there - 'a narrow passage about two feet wide and barely five feet high ... cut through limestone. It can only be negotiated with rubber boots and a slight stoop. Water knee-deep rushes to meet you. For about 500 yards the passage winds imperceptibly uphill. It ends at the Virgin's Fountain, Jerusalem's water supply since ancient times. In Biblical days it was called the Fountain of Gihon.'³

³ *The Bible as history* - Keller, Hodder & Stoughton

Sennacherib's Account



The Taylor Prism

Sennacherib returned to Nineveh his capital city. The boastful account ends not in triumph but with an anticlimax. What had happened? What made Sennacherib withdraw at the last moment?

'And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt in Nineveh.'¹

THREE ACCOUNTS HAVE been left by the Assyrian monarch himself of his campaign against Israel and Judah. The most famous is the six-sided prism known as the Taylor Prism. Sennacherib described in detail how he came against the cities of Israel and then Judah, and *'Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem his capital city like a bird in a cage.'*

Many smaller towns and villages fell. The might of all Assyria was marshalled against Hezekiah. But the Taylor Prism does not record the defeat of Hezekiah or the fall of Jerusalem as one would expect.



Relief from the palace of Nineveh showing the siege of Lachish

¹2 Kings 19.35,36

In addition to the evidence of Sennacherib's own account, in 1938 the archaeologist Starkey found a mass grave outside the city of Lachish, which Sennacherib had conquered and which was the base for the Assyrian move to Jerusalem. In the Lachish grave were 2,000 human skeletons evidently thrown in with great haste. Here was the reason for Sennacherib's sudden withdrawal.

The palace at Nineveh was decorated with massive stone wall panels depicting the siege of Lachish. These are attractively arranged in the Lachish Gallery in the British Museum and can be seen as they would have appeared in their original positions. They provide a detailed background to the Bible account.



Siege of Lachish - surrender of the Israelites²

SENNACHERIB ASSASSINATED

The Bible account of Sennacherib concludes with these words:

'So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

*And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.'*³

The same event was recorded for the library at Nineveh and the clay tablet of the record is now in the British Museum.

'On the twentieth day of the month Tebet Sennacherib king of Assyria his son slew him in rebellion ... Esarhaddon his son sat on the throne of Assyria.'

This is one of the many independent confirmations of details in the Biblical records.

OTHER KINGS

The Assyrian period of history can provide many similar examples of confirmation. The British Museum publication, *'Illustrations of Old Testament History'* by

²2 Kings 18.13-17 ³2 Kings 19.36,37

Barnett gives many examples. The soldier-prince Pul (2 Kings 15.19) or Tiglath-pileser, his general Rabshakeh (2 Kings 18.17) or Rab-shaqui, have left their names in monuments and inscriptions. A limestone relief from Nimrud portrays the surrender of Ashtoreth in Gilead with the name clearly labelled in cuneiform script.

Shalmaneser, too, left a wealth of monuments and inscriptions, a number of which mention the monarchs of other nations.

A study of the period gives us great confidence in the accuracy of the Biblical records. We can look at carvings and statues of monarchs mentioned in the Bible. Scholars have translated accounts of the campaigns and treaties and details of the private lives of the great men of the period - and these confirm the Bible narrative. Because archaeology has shown that the Bible records are accurate in some of the smallest details, we can have confidence in the reliability of the writers. We should be prepared to consider carefully the writings of the Bible as a whole.



Esarhaddon receiving homage from the king of Egypt (kneeling) and the king of Sidon.

Babylon

FROM ALMOST INCIDENTAL references in the writings of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, all of whom lived during the period 700 to 500 BC, we learn a number of facts about the development of Babylon into a most formidable fortress city. Jeremiah for example, speaks of *'the broad walls of Babylon ... and her high gates.'*¹ Isaiah prophesies the overthrow of Babylon by Cyrus the Persian and makes reference to the *'two-leaved gates'* of that city.² Daniel records an occasion when Nebuchadnezzar, walking upon the palace roof, boasted of his achievements: 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?'³



Artist's impression of ancient city of Babylon

¹Jeremiah 51.58 ²Isaiah 45.1,2 ³Daniel 4.30

These may be just incidental references, but what is the picture? GREAT BABYLON, having broad walls, a broad city, with great and high gates. This is how the Bible spoke of that city nearly 2,600 years ago. Herodotus, who was born about a hundred years after the death of Daniel, visited the city and in his history describes what he saw. His description supports and amplifies that of the Bible.

It seems incredible that in time Babylon should so completely disappear, except for these two fragmentary sources of evidence. Yet this civilisation did disappear completely for over 2,000 years - so completely that Herodotus was pronounced unreliable and the Bible legendary, because both spoke of this civilisation of which there was no trace until the nineteenth century.

Incredible? Not to the student of the Bible! The Bible said that this great civilisation would so disappear. This was something which Herodotus did not say and could not say. There could be no stronger evidence for the Divine authorship of the Bible than the remarkable discoveries in the '*land between the rivers*' made by the archaeologist in the last century. It is a fascinating and exciting story, well documented - but carrying with it for those who can see and hear, the most solemn warning for the generation of today. This can easily be seen by placing some of the prophecies concerning the desolation of Babylon side by side with the facts as they have since been discovered. To the evidence of the historical accuracy of the Bible we can add that of the fulfilment of its prophecies.



Ruins of the Southern Palace at Babylon.

Prophecy

WE HAVE THE words pronounced against Babylon by the prophet Isaiah, before Nebuchadnezzar had come on the scene with all his remarkable feats of engineering!

'And it shall come to pass ... that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

'For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord.

'I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction.'

Again the prophet writes:

'And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited...'

There are many similar prophecies. Babylon was to become like Sodom and Gomorrah! Few Bible lovers at the beginning of the nineteenth century suspected what dramatic demonstrations of the fulfilment of this prophecy were ahead. We believe the remains of Sodom and Gomorrah are buried under the waters of the southern tip of the Dead Sea, and they found Babylon buried under 70 feet of mud, sand and rubble!

The city was surrounded by three separate walls 22 feet, 25 feet and 12 feet thick, running approximately 14 miles long on all four sides. They found the tower. It was built in the form of a series of terraces - the lowest one was 288 feet square and the total height of the building was also estimated to have been 288 feet.

Fifty-eight million bricks went into the construction of it! The most splendid thoroughfare of the ancient world led in a straight line from the Ishtar gate of Babylon to the tower or temple.



Brick stamped with the names and titles of Nebuchadnezzar

¹ Isaiah 14.3,4,22,23 ² Isaiah 13.19,20 (See also Jeremiah 50 & 51)

Nebuchadnezzar describes it:

'Aibur-shabu, the street of Babylon, I filled with high fill for the procession of the great Lord Marduk, and with Turminabanda stones and Shadu stones I made this Aibur-shabu from the "holy gate" to Ishtar-saki-patebisha, fit for the procession of his godliness.'



The Ishtar Gate reconstructed in the East Berlin Museum

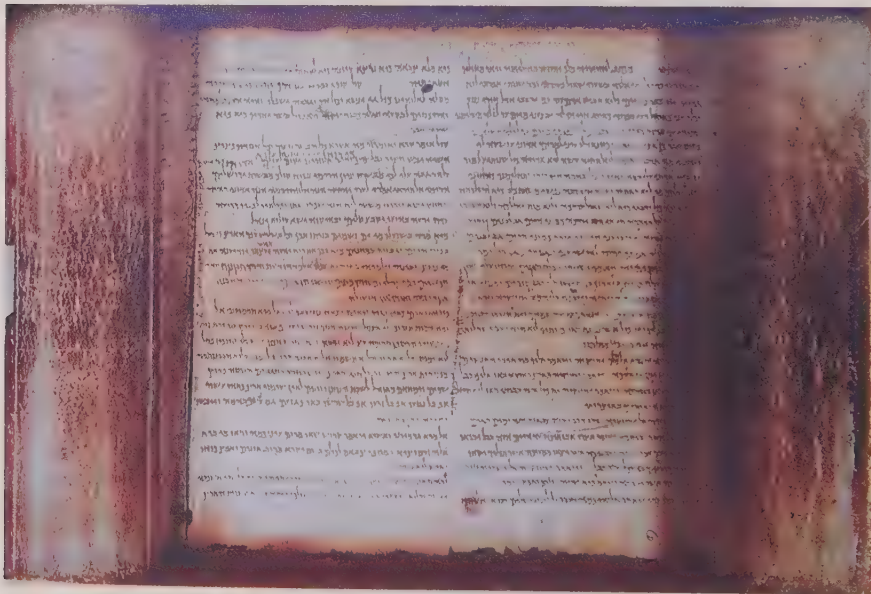
On each of the slabs with which the street was paved is inscribed: *'Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon son of Nabopolassar king of Babylon, am I. The Babel street I paved with Shadu slabs for this procession of the great Lord Marduk. Marduk, Lord, grant eternal life.'* Several times our newspapers have reported from Baghdad on projects which aim at rebuilding Babylon as it was in the seventh century BC although these have never been completed. Yet before the nineteenth century AD no-one believed what the Bible said about Babylon.

What need for further evidence of the historical accuracy of the Bible and for the fulfilment of its prophecies? They have been fully vindicated in the case of Babylon after 2,600 years. But time is always on God's side - never on man's. And time is still on God's side - for within 50 years of the discovery of its ruins, nature was already clawing Babylon back to her grave and steadily hiding it again under a shroud of sand from the deserts. Babylon was overthrown as God said it would be and the empire has vanished. There may be some who think they can restore this great Babylon, but time will tell whether their plans will succeed - the Word of God tells us - *'it shall never be inhabited.'*³

³ *Isaiah 13.20*

The Dead Sea Scrolls

EARLY IN 1947 a young Bedouin shepherd was searching for a lost goat among the rocky ravines of the north shore of the Dead Sea at Wadi-Qumran in Israel. He found in the course of his search a cave, which contained what has been for Bible students great treasure indeed - the Dead Sea Scrolls. The careless handling of these valuable documents as they were 'hawked' around the Arab 'black markets' makes agonising reading¹ but in the course of time they became available for the careful scrutiny of experts.



The Isaiah scroll open at chapter 40

Probably the most valuable of these documents is the 'Isaiah Scroll'. Some 23 feet long and made of leather, it is a remarkable testimony to the textual accuracy of the Bible as we know it today. Modern methods of estimating the age of the scroll and its flax, or linen cover, reveal the fact that it is a transcription of the complete text of the book of Isaiah made in about 100 BC. The value of this 'find' lies in the fact that it pre-dates the oldest manuscripts available in Hebrew² by some 1,000 years, and comparisons made between our modern translation of the book of the prophet Isaiah and this ancient scroll, show that the book we have in our hands today accurately reflects what was originally written.

¹ *The Bible as History* - Keller, Hodder & Stoughton ² *The Masoretic Text* 9th-10th Century AD

This scroll, made of 17 sheets of leather sewn together, reminds us of the scene in the synagogue at Galilee depicted in the Gospel record through Luke:

'And there was delivered unto him [Jesus] the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor...'³

About 1991, the Institut für Mittelenergiephysik in Zurich conducted Carbon 14 tests on eight scrolls from Qumran caves and six scrolls from nearby sites. These were Masada, Wadi Dayiyeh, Khirbet Mird, Wadi Murrabba'at and Wadi Seyal where manuscripts found are considered to be part of the Dead Sea Scroll collection.

Ten of the scrolls had already been dated by a method known as 'Palaeographic' which is based upon the style of script used, when the script is known and proved from other sources. In addition was the dating of pottery which was found in the vicinity of the scrolls as well as coins. Eight of the ten scrolls were from Qumran with the other two from Masada and as a result of the tests, it was confirmed that seven of the eight Qumran matched the Palaeographic dates allocated to them.

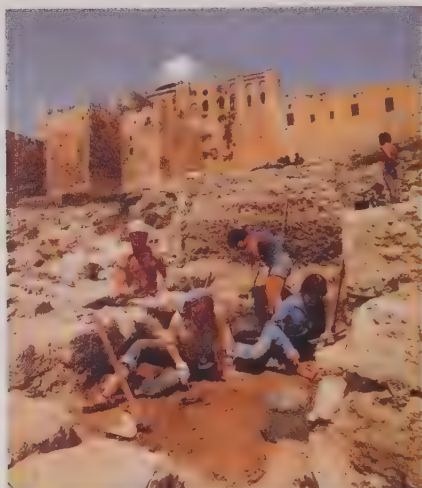
One of them was the Isaiah scroll which is now confirmed as being no later than 100 BC, with the other scrolls being a 'Paraphrase of the Pentateuch', the 'Testament of Levi', 'Samuel', the 'Temple Scroll', the 'Genesis Apocryphon' and the 'Thanksgiving Scroll'.

The results from this renowned Institute is a further example that the continual advance of science never conflicts with, but establishes the truth of, the Scriptural record.

The Word of God has since been preached in almost every language in the world. It is reassuring to know that the Bible we have today is accurate and reliable - a book to be trusted.⁴

³Luke 4.17,18 ⁴*Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls* is another special issue of *Light* which gives more detailed information on this subject (see page 28).

COVER PICTURE



By kind permission of the Israel information centre we have reproduced this picture of archaeologists working in the Archaeological Park alongside the southern wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

This is an example of the painstaking but rewarding work of the archaeologists which is in progress on this site and many others throughout the land of Israel. Most of these sites are open to tourists who are able to see for themselves the uncovering of the past and take photographs of the exciting remains which the archaeologist's spade has revealed. It is usually possible to obtain a colour brochure containing all the relevant historical information and biblical references where they apply.

Further information can be obtained from the Israel Government Tourist Office at Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 1AF, England.

Notice from the Temple at Jerusalem

THE SHARP DISTINCTION between Jew and Gentile in matters of worship was based upon the law given through Moses. In the temple at Jerusalem there was an area which was strictly 'out of bounds' to all but Jews, and one of the accusations made against the Apostle Paul was that he had brought Greeks into the temple. We are told



Temple notice

white limestone notice found in Jerusalem, and dating from about 30 AD. The inscription reads: 'Whoever is caught doing so [ie entering the forbidden area] will have himself to blame that his death ensues.'

This find gives point to the Apostle's teaching that '*in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.*'²

That is, in Christ the barrier that separates Jew and Gentile has been removed - '*For ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*'³

that '*... the Jews ... stirred up all the people ... crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people and the law and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.*'¹

The Bible record is illustrated by a

THE BIBLE AND FAITH

In spite of prevailing uncertainty and disbelief we firmly maintain that if you will recognise the Bible as God's holy word of truth - the revelation of His dealings with His people in the past and His plans for the future - and are prepared to accept it logically and wholeheartedly, the wonder of its message can become so clear and positive to you as to engender a faith and trust as real as that experienced by the apostles themselves.

¹ Acts 21.27,28 ² Ephesians 2.13,14 ³ Galatians 3.28

THE CHALLENGE OF THE SPADE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS DO not in themselves prove that the Bible is the Word of God; nor do they prove the truth of statements about the future. If you have already realised this you might well ask - Why have we produced an issue of this magazine merely setting out a number of archaeological discoveries which have some connection with the record contained in the Bible? It is because archaeological finds have in many instances provided vital proof that statements, places, people or events which have been dismissed previously as mythical were indeed factual.

Despite attempts to discredit historical and geographical statements in the Bible, no evidence whatsoever has come to light which shows the Biblical record to be erroneous. It is true that some archaeological interpretations may be disputed, but this does not cast doubts upon the accuracy of the scriptural account; it only shows the fallibility of men.

In this branch of science lies a challenge to the Bible, for every time the archaeologist's spade finds a potsherd, a statue, a brick, a seal or a scroll, it could prove a Biblical statement to be inaccurate. But it is a challenge that has been more than met, for, far from proving the inaccuracy of the Bible, archaeology is constantly proving its truth.

The finds range from the time of the captivity and slavery of Egypt, to the rule of kings like Hezekiah and Jehu; from the invasion and captivities of Assyria and Babylon, to a notice which was used to try and excite people against the Apostle Paul. These are evidence which, like fulfilled prophecy, give a sparkle to faith and a confidence that our hope for the future stands on a reliable and proven base.

When Moses led the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt with its brick-making and building projects, he recognised the overruling power of God: *'Who is like unto thee, O Lord ... thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.'*¹

David in the Psalms demonstrates that he also recognised the power of God's hand to save in marked contrast to that of man:

*'Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.'*²

It was this help which Hezekiah received when he put his trust in God, for it is recorded of the siege by Sennacherib: *'Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria.'*³

¹Exodus 15.11-13 ²Psalms 146.3-5 ³2 Chronicles 32.22

THE CHALLENGE OF THE SPADE

The Apostle Paul wrote to the young man Timothy '*... the foundation of God standeth sure.*'⁴ Archaeology can help to make us realise the sureness of God's plan with the earth as revealed in His divine record. Just as a detective might piece together the evidence of a tyre print, an old bus ticket or some other apparently meaningless item to solve a mystery and reveal the truth, so we hope you will assimilate the facts and evidences available to establish in you a confidence that '*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.*'⁵

But where does all this lead us? Surely it means that the proven accuracy of the Bible enables us to have every confidence in its inspiration and therefore encourages us to study its message of hope about the establishment of God's Kingdom on the earth. Just as archaeology is important to us, so is the Bible's message for all who will take time to read it, for it leads us to a complete understanding of God's plan with the earth - '*But it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*'⁶

⁴2 Timothy 2.19 ⁵2 Timothy 3.16,17 ⁶1 Corinthians 2.9

Send for your **FREE** copy of
Light ... on the Dead Sea Scrolls



A remarkable account of a remarkable discovery.

Even today, they are still being translated and
with every step, the Biblical record is confirmed

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The Trustees of the British Museum:- photographs on pages 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16 and 19; The Louvre, Paris:- page 6; Others from private sources.

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